

Iwade Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118340
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312896
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Batson
Headteacher	Katrina Ware
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	School Lane Iwade Sittingbourne ME9 8RS
Telephone number	01795 472578
Fax number	01795 435724

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Since the last inspection, buildings have been extended to accommodate the increased roll because of housing development. A slightly higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has out-of-school care before and after school. The headteacher was appointed and took over the running of the school in January 2006 and the school became formally federated with Bobbing School in September 2007, with one governing body, following a period of collaboration between the two schools. The school has Investor in People status and the Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Iwade is a satisfactory school. It is recovering well from a period of significant disruption in leadership and staffing and is benefiting from the newly-formed federation. The headteacher's leadership skills are evident in the way in which she has promoted very effective teamwork across the two schools to identify and disseminate effective practice. Staff are clear about what has to be done to bring about further improvement and are fully committed to improving pupils' achievements. Leadership and management are satisfactory and new middle managers have good support to develop their skills, so staff morale is high.

Pupils get a secure start and make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Standards through the school declined significantly in 2007 when pupils did not make enough progress, but the school's data indicates that pupils are back on course to achieve average results in the national tests this year. The reversal in the standards and pupils' satisfactory achievement across the school shows the success of the school's work and indicates that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and respond well, for example by taking care with the presentation of their work. Pupils enjoy school, particularly playing together and during extra-curricular sport. They talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy special activities such as the science day and where cross-curricular links make topics seem more relevant, but do not show the same levels of engagement in other lessons and subjects because they do not find the work as interesting or creative.

Satisfactory care, guidance and support ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are sound. Pupils' progress is monitored frequently and work is marked regularly. This information is analysed and used to inform teaching and where additional support needs to be given to accelerate the progress of individual pupils. However, the school recognises that the information is not always used well enough to match the work accurately to the needs of individuals in lessons. Pupils find their new targets helpful, but these are not always precise enough for pupils to be clear about the next steps in their learning. The positive school ethos and the curriculum promote pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. The effective procedures for pupils' personal care and support are shown in their good behaviour, and improved attendance which is now in line with the national average. Most parents are fully supportive of the school and recognise its strengths. They particularly appreciate that staff are friendly and approachable. Many comment positively on recent improvements, for example in providing them with more information about what is going on in school. Pupils, too, appreciate recent changes in organisation, such as the revival of the school council and changed arrangements in the playground. They say that they 'like the school as it is now'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Pupils join the Reception classes with skills and understanding in line with the expectations for their age. Children are happy and confident and have trusting and positive relationships with adults. They develop their social skills effectively and play together harmoniously. As a consequence, children make satisfactory progress across all the areas of learning. This year, children are making particularly good progress in learning to read and write because of the

introduction of a new phonics scheme which is to continue into Years 1 and 2. Adults engage children well in conversation but sometimes children could be pressed further to explain their own thinking and deepen their understanding further. The Foundation Stage leader recognises what needs to be improved, for example to develop the outside area further to include more opportunities for imaginative play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by making marking and target setting more specific about the next steps for pupils' learning.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that the level of challenge is appropriate for pupils of all abilities.
- Increase pupils' engagement in lessons and with the curriculum by improving cross-curricular links and enriching opportunities for their creative development.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average. They have risen faster than nationally since the last inspection, reflecting the changing intake profile of children joining the school. Standards in the Year 6 tests have also risen overall, but not at as fast as nationally. However, in 2007, standards declined significantly in both Years 2 and 6 and the school fell short of its targets. Pupils across the school did not make enough progress, as a result of disruption to their learning through changes in staffing and low expectations of what pupils could achieve. Now that these weaknesses have been addressed, pupils of all abilities are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting points and are gradually making up for time lost earlier. Pupils' work and the school's data show that pupils are achieving standards in line with those expected nationally, preparing them satisfactorily to undertake the next stage of their education. This is giving the school confidence to set more challenging targets which are appropriate for the future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Some older pupils commented positively on recent improvements, such as more opportunities for them to take responsibility and 'to do things for ourselves'. These help pupils to contribute to their own community and the school has plans to extend such opportunities further. Pupils also contribute to the wider community, for example by regular events to support local charities. Pupils know that individuals have different needs and understand how their actions affect others. This is largely as a result of the successful personal, social and health education programme. They have responded well to the new approaches to reward good behaviour and attitudes. Bullying is not an issue and pupils know that any incidents of inconsiderate behaviour are dealt with well when reported to an adult. The school council and 'playground buddies' help pupils to feel involved. The school recognises that extra-curricular activities need to be extended to meet the needs of a wider range of interests and improve pupils' cultural and social development further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The regular monitoring of performance and joint planning across the federation have been effective in developing consistency across the school. Although only satisfactory overall, some good lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers provide a well-structured series of activities to achieve the intended learning. Pupils show greater enthusiasm for learning in practical activities and say that these help them particularly well to learn. Teachers use 'learning partners' well to give pupils useful opportunities to discuss their ideas. However, sometimes pupils are not required to develop their skills further by having to justify their thinking in depth, which would provide better challenge, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to present information to good effect and this helps to enliven activities. Some lesson introductions are not matched closely enough to individual needs. This leads to some pupils not being fully stretched while others are left behind, leading to lapses in attention. When teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough, learning has to be explained again for pupils to complete their individual tasks successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum places due emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and the introduction of new approaches, such as target-setting and a phonics programme, has resulted in improvements in achievement. The new curriculum teams across the federation schools are successfully sharing good practice. Some links are made between subjects, and teachers are gradually developing more opportunities, for example for pupils to practise writing in other subjects. Visits and visitors, such as those involved in the Year 4 science day, ensure that there are productive links to the community and outside world. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection but pupils could still use computers more across different subjects. The school has identified key priorities to develop the creative aspects of the curriculum to make learning more relevant and fun, and to provide enrichment opportunities with more real-life examples.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Academic guidance is sound. Pupils' progress is checked frequently and additional support given to any pupils beginning to fall behind. Some of these intervention programmes are relatively new in the school but data shows that they are beginning to improve progress. Marking acknowledges achievement well and often points out what has to be done to make work better, but pupils are not always required to respond to the guidance given, so that misunderstandings are not addressed quickly enough. Pupils like the new targets of what they have to do to reach the next level, but they are not always clear enough about their own next steps for their learning. The school's care and support for pupils' personal development is good, and is seen in the school's success in reducing the rate of exclusions and increasing attendance rates. Pupils identified as vulnerable have sensitive and valuable support, enabling them to address personal and emotional difficulties. Outside agencies provide additional expertise when this is needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new and enthusiastic leadership team has effectively ensured that both the responsibilities and the vision of the school are shared by all staff. New staff have been successfully inducted into the school. Teamwork is strong and focused on a relentless drive to raise standards. The procedures to track pupils' progress are rigorous and are effectively raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school rightly identifies that the next stage of development is to improve the skills of middle managers further. Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and discharge their responsibilities well because they are kept informed through regular meetings and monitoring reports. They have taken appropriate action to ensure financial stability for the future. Links with parents and the local community are developing and the parents' council plays an important role in advising the school of any concerns. Many of the school's systems and programmes are new and there has not yet been time to evaluate which initiatives are having the greatest impact, but the new approaches are already beginning to improve pupils' achievements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Iwade Community Primary School, Sittingbourne ME9 8RS

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited recently. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

- These are the main things we found out about your school:
- We know that you and your parents like your school and that you feel happy and secure there.
- The school provides you with a satisfactory education.
- Your behaviour is good and this helps you to play together well.
- You work quite hard and make sound progress in improving your literacy and numeracy.
- You told us that you particularly enjoy the special activities, such as the science day, and we saw how enthusiastically you were working during the day.
- You understand about the best things to eat and why it is important to take exercise.
- The staff think carefully about how well the school is doing and take action when they think something needs improving.
- You told us about all the recent changes, such as the new targets, and that you enjoy having the chance to take on responsibility as school councillors or as playground buddies.
- Teachers are always trying to make things better and we have asked them to:
 - give you clearer information about exactly what you have to do next when they mark your work and set targets
 - make sure that the work they give you is always at the right level, not too hard or too easy
 - find more ways to make the curriculum exciting and interesting for you.

You can help by making sure that you always try your best and ask for help if there is anything that you do not understand.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. We enjoyed reading their comments. We wish everyone at Iwade every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead Inspector

6 March 2008

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Lead Inspector